

Appendix E: Historic Preservation

Part A: Obtaining Historic Designation

Individual structures, buildings, monuments and/or an area with a significant number of historic structures can be designated as historic at three levels: 1. Local level: City of Houston Historic Designation; 2) State level: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Designation; and/or 3) Federal level: National Park Services National Register of Historic Places.

1. City of Houston Historic Designation

Under the City of Houston Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City Council, upon recommendation by the Planning Commission and Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) may designate buildings, structures, sites or areas that have historical, cultural, architectural, or archaeological significance as historic. For structure, a specific site or building(s), the property owner or the HAHC may request a designation. For a district, the owners of at least 67% of the properties that equate to 51% of the land in the proposed district or the HAHC may request a designation. (A historic district is a geographic area of historical, cultural or aesthetic importance to the community.)

To be designated a historic structure, building or site, the following criteria must be met:

- The structure, site or area must be identified with a person or group that contributed significantly to the city's cultural or historical development, such as Bayou Bend;
- It must possess distinctive characteristics of architecture, building type, construction period or method that is representative of an area, such as the Market Square Historic District;
- The site or structure must be at least 50 years old. If it is not, it must be of extraordinary importance to the city, such as the Johnson Space Center.

Upon obtaining historic designation by the City, exterior alteration, new construction, relocation or demolition of any historic structure, object or site or excavation of any archaeological site is subject to authorization by the HAHC through approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness. The ordinance does not regulate land use or interior alterations or remodeling; and does not override deed restrictions.

2. Texas State Historic Landmarks Designation

Per authorization by the Texas Legislature under Texas Government Code Chapter 442, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) designation can be bestowed on Texas historic structures deeming worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Any type of historic structure, including but not limited to bridges, commercial buildings, churches, residences and school houses can be considered for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark designation, provided the structure has retained integrity and its history can be documented according to Official Texas Marker Policies.

To be eligible for designation as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, the following criteria must be met:

- A structure must be at least 50 years old and have retained its architectural integrity;
- It must be in good state of repair and be an exemplary model of preservation; and
- The structure must not have been moved in the past 50 years.

Structures designated as RTHLs do not have to be open to the public but require notification to THC before any exterior alteration is undertaken. Structures do not have to be open to the public, designation applies to the exterior only and is a permanent designation which runs with the land.

3. National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is our nation's official list of properties significant in American history, architecture and archeology. It includes properties of local, state and national significance. Designation to the National Register of Historic Places is highly selective and is jointly conducted by the state

and federal governments. The application for designation is evaluated by the State Board of Review and the National Register staff. It is then forwarded to the National Park service for final decision.

A National Register property is not required to be accessible to the public; not required to be used, maintained, restored, or rehabilitated according to any restrictive guidelines; and is not subject to restrictive covenants by the National Register, unless grant assistance or tax credits are accepted by the property owner. Five types of property are eligible for designation: buildings, districts, objects, sites or structures.

To be eligible for National Register designation, properties must:

- be at least 50 years old;
- possess significance in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture as well as integrity of location, design setting, material, workmanship, feeling and associations; and
- meet at least one of the following:
 - √ be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history;
 - √ be associated with the lives of persons significant in American history; embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - √ have yielded or be likely to yield, information important to history or prehistory.

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Certain properties are not ordinarily considered for listing in the National Register. These include cemeteries, birthplaces or graves of historical figures.

Part B: Tools for Historic Preservation

In recent years, significant historic sites and structures have been recognized, not only as cultural and historic resources but also as catalysts for revitalization. A variety of tools exists among public and nonprofit organizations to help preserve historic resources and act as a trigger for neighborhood revitalization. These tools offer financial, technical and administrative support for projects. Community-based organizations (CBO) as well as individuals can take advantage of these tools in a number of ways. A CBO could act as an information clearinghouse, a project manager, owner or partner with an individual to acquire, restore and maintain acquire a historic property.

Grants, loans and revolving funds are available from nonprofit and public institutions for restoration. Tax credits, tax deductions and tax exemptions at the local, state and federal level are some of the benefits associated with historic preservation. Following are some of the tax incentives available for historic preservation:

City of Houston Historic Site Tax Exemption. Supporting the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance is a tax relief ordinance for historic properties whereby an exemption from City property taxes of up to 100% is allowed on the difference between the assessed value before and after restoration (Contact: Planning and Development Department Historic Preservation Officer).



Houston skyline, 1930's, from the Near Northside (Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).

Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Program. This program enables any nonprofit corporation exempted under the Tax Code §151-309 or 151-310 to receive a tax exemption for the labor involved in remodeling, restoring, or repairing income producing buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places (does not include materials or equipment (Contact: State of Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts).

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program. The program gives owners of historic properties either a 20% or 10% rehabilitation tax credit for improving their structure. (Contact: Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas).

More detailed information on tax aspects of historic preservation can be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service at: www.2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/irs.htm.

Are there monetary incentives to restore a historic structure?

The city may grant a tax exemption to qualified property owners who improve designated historic properties. Property owners who have been denied a Certificate of Appropriateness are not eligible for a tax exemption. When the city grants the exemption it is valid for five years. If combined with other tax entities, the exemption period may be valid for up to 10 years.

Part C: Northside Village Historic Resources

Background

The Near Northside was once a part of the Fifth Ward that was formed in 1866 out of the First and Second wards north of Buffalo Bayou and east of White Oak Bayou. Houston's wards were

Northside Village Economic Revitalization Plan

established as political districts, each represented by elected alderman. When Houston adopted a commission form of government in 1905, the political life of the wards ended yet their name continues to this day to describe geographic areas of the inner city. Today the western boundary of the Fifth Ward zigzags between Maury and Hwy 59. The area west of Fifth Ward to I-45 is known as the Near Northside.

On April 16, 1928, the citizens of the Northside organized the Northside Planning and Civics. The boundary of their service area was "Buffalo Bayou on the south and extending north to the city limits [Hays Street], and from little White Oak Bayou on the west and Lockwood Drive on the east."¹ This group published a quarterly magazine called *The Northside* for over a decade. The magazines contain articles about businesses, personalities, and civic issues pertinent to the Northside. Their mission was "To foster and promote civic pride . . . to aid rational development of the Northside and in the City as a whole . . . to help in directing this development into proper channels by separation of residential and industrial districts; to encourage proper location, equipment and management of the recreational facilities . . . to assist in creation of the best possible neighborly relationship between our residents and to aid in every way found available the promotion of civic welfare of the men, women and children of this and future generations. These were the reasons for the creation of Northside Planning and Civics."² Membership was available to anyone living within the boundaries whether renter or homeowner.

There were no dues and no collections taken. Coincidentally this mission many of the same issues facing/addressed Northside Village today.

Mission Statement of the Northside Planning and Civics:

"To foster and promote civic pride . . . to aid rational development of the Northside and in the City as a whole . . . to help in directing this development into proper channels by separation of residential and industrial districts; to encourage proper location, equipment and management of the recreational facilities . . . to assist in creation of the best possible neighborly relationship between our residents and to aid in every way found available the promotion of civic welfare of the men, women and children of this and future generations. These were the reasons for the creation of Northside Planning and Civics."

Plat Maps/Development Patterns

The earliest land platted in the Northside was the plat of blocks 1-151 of Ryon, also known as Germantown. The Ryon plat was filled on November 17, 1862. Boundaries were Maury to the east, Line Street to the south, Terry and Roberston Streets (Roberts) to the west and beyond Gaines Street to the north.

South of Ryon, Miss Helen Culver of Chicago, Ill. filed the plat for Cascara, a subdivision out C. T. Hull's subdivision out of the Noble Tract, on December 10, 1890. This subdivision was platted with long blocks,



Detail of Ryon Plat, filled 1862 (From the City of Houston Map and plat room).



Cascara School
Masthead from plat of Irvin, filled 1891
(Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Center,
Houston Public Library).
(From the City of Houston
map and plat room).



narrow lots with alleys. Cascara school is located on Block 4 between Terry and McKee. Boundaries of the Cascara plat are two lots south of Noble for the northern boundary, the western boundary includes the west side of Gano, eastern boundary is Maury and the southern boundary is Harrington. Center, Houston Public Library).

In the far southern portion of the study area is Chapman's First a plat that spans the north and south sides of Buffalo Bayou. Filed by William Chapman on March 11, 1861, this plat extends into the Warehouse District south of I-10 up to the Southern Pacific railyards. The majority of the proposed Industrial Historic District is located in Chapman's First.

John R. Irvin filed the original plat of Irvinton on May 3, 1891. The 86 block plat had a western boundary of Fulton or the park, a northern boundary of Cavalcade. The east and west boundaries followed irregular paths on either sides of Irvington. On older city maps, Irvington is actually spelled Irvinton, presumable after John R. Irvin. This perhaps explains the name of the Houston Housing Authority project 'Irvinton Village' located on Irvington. It is easy to assume that the signage on the federal housing is incorrect yet it is more correct than the actual street name.

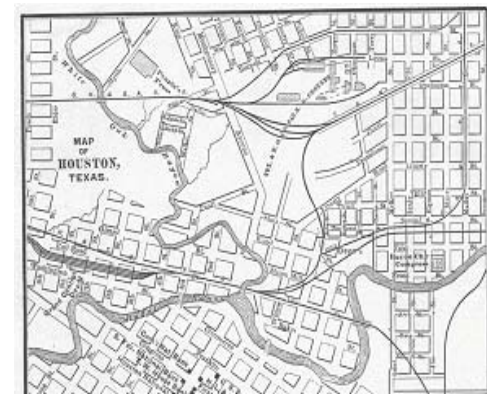
Transportation

A) Railroads

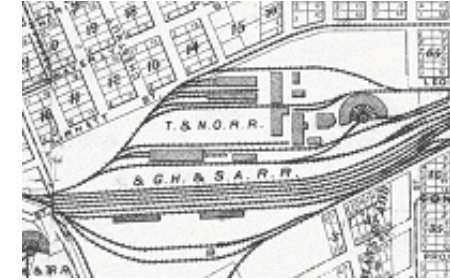
In 1850, Houston began its railroad fever with a rail line from Harrisburg to Austin. By 1861 there were 357 miles of railway centering in Houston. By 1893 this number had increased to



8,857 miles with fourteen rail lines transporting predominantly cotton and staple crops. The Northside, due to the availability of open land and lack of development at the time, was the chosen side of the bayou for the majority of the new rail lines, as well as, the Southern Pacific rail shops. (Courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).



1892 Houston map showing Southern Pacific shops in the Northside (Map courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).



Detail of 1900 map of Houston showing Southern Pacific Shops and train turn around (Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).



Because of the abundance of jobs, the rail shops supported the development of the neighborhood as more people chose to live near their work. Large industrial buildings were constructed on the Southern Pacific site to house fabrication and repair services. Many of the industrial buildings are historic and an important and dynamic resource for the Near Northside. A sensitive redevelopment of the site should include the preservation and reutilization of the industrial buildings. These buildings are an

View of Southern Pacific buildings. Photos early 20th century (Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).

important part of the neighborhood's history as neighborhood development occurred largely due to the presence of the Southern Pacific yards.

Several tax incentives are available for the Southern Pacific Rail yard site:

- City of Houston (local)
- Investment Tax Credits (federal)

B) Electric rail

The earliest public transportation in the Northside was a mule drawn car that crossed Buffalo Bayou at San Jacinto. This car traveled north on Willow and made a zigzag loop onto Liberty, then north on McKee, east on Conti, south on Semmes, west on Providence and then south on McKee to Third and back to Liberty. This was the only streetcar line in the Northside at a time when lines south of Buffalo Bayou were expanding farther to the south and west.

Electric rail service along Montgomery (now North Main) began in 1892. The electric rail service, a precursor to the jitney and our present day METRO buses, allowed for people to live farther from

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Streetcar at Main at Hogan, view south (Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).



METRO bus, 1970'2. North Main Street at Quitman (Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).

their work establishments. Motivation to provide service to the Northside was the Southern Pacific rail shops, for decades one of the city's largest industrial employers. The Montgomery route of the 1890s extended only as far north as Hogan Street, but it was later lengthened and by 1903 it provided a loop service. Service was provided to both industrial and residential neighborhoods as well as the massive Southern Pacific Lines railroad shops.



Streetcar at Main at Hogan, view north (Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library).

C) Library

Carnegie Library was demolished to make way for a new library. The monumental front columns from the original library still stand in the park adjacent to the new library.



D) Bridges

The Main Street viaduct opened in 1913 and was hailed by residents as the "Gateway to the Northside". The bridge, designed by F. L. Dormant, City Engineer, was the largest single-arch concrete span in Texas at the time of its construction. "Over the hump, and through the hole, to the land of the free and the brave-Fifth Ward, Texas." -Silverdale resident, from oral interview. Discussion of whether the McKee Street Bridge would every be completed was



Location of Main Street Viaduct, Before.



McKee Street Bridge

the subject of several articles over a period of years in the Northside.

E) Hospitals

Sunset Hospital [now Thomas Street Clinic] was built as a staff hospital for workers of the Southern Pacific's shops - the largest industrial employer in the Northside neighborhood in the late 1800s and early 1900s.



Main Street Viaduct, opened in 1913, designed by City Engineer, F.L. Dormant (Photo courtesy of the postcard collection of Randy Pace).

F) Cemeteries

Hollywood Cemetery, 3506 North Main is on a 60 acre site with 22,000+ graves on the banks of Little White Oak Bayou. Famous people buried there include Julia Ideson (1880-1945) who is largely credited with developing the Houston public library system and



Sunset Hospital/Southern Pacific Hospital (now: Thomas Street Clinic), built in 1911 by the department of Buildings and Bridges, Galveston, Houston & San Antonio Railway.



Sunset Hospital Nurses Home in the 1930's. Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

served as its first librarian. When Hollywood cemetery opened in 1896 its location was described as on the west side of West Montgomery road, half a mile north of the city limits. This historic resource is in excellent condition and remains a pleasant place to visit.

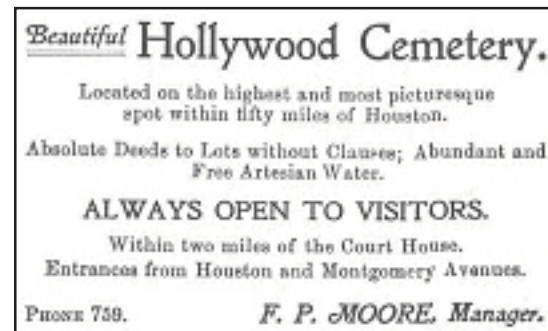
Holy Cross Cemetery, a Catholic cemetery at 3502 North Main opened in 1904. Maurice Joseph Sullivan (1884-1961), and members of the Foley family are buried here. Sullivan, who specialized in the design of buildings for Catholic religious orders,



*Hollywood Cemetery.
Courtesy of the postcard
collection of Randy Pace.*



Entrance to Hollywood Cemetery, 1930's.



*Hollywood Cemetery
advertisement from
1900 city directory.*

was city architect from 1912-1919, designed the Vila de Matel (1923-1928) and is the architect of the Northside's Jefferson Davis Senior High School (1926) in collaboration with Birdsall P. Briscoe. In the Holy Cross mausoleum are the remains of Father Augustine d'Asti (1827-1866), an Italian Franciscan missionary who worked with Houston's poor from 1860-1866. The mausoleum has reliefs by artist Maria Kanova.

G) Schools



Jefferson Davis Senior High School



Elysian Street School



Cascara School



Lee Elementary School



North End High School (courtesy of the postcard collection of Randy Pace).

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H) Commercial Buildings

Case Study 1

An early 20th century commercial Strip (Located in Node 2) 1917-1919-1921-1923 North Main is a block long commercial strip located on the west side of North Main between James and Gargan. This early 20th century commercial block is made up of four separate architecturally significant buildings. Collectively, the



1923 North Main



1921 North Main



1919 North Main



1917 North Main

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*1900 block of North
Main Street*



*1900 Block of North Main
after sensitive rehabilitation*



*Northside gas station, 1930's (Photo courtesy of
Metropolitain Research Center, Houston Public Library).*



*Northside gas station, (Photo
courtesy of Metropolitain
Research Center, Houston
Public Library).*



*Candy Store (Photo courtesy
of Metropolitain Research
Center, Houston Public
Library).*



*Hamburger Stand on North
Main Street (Photo courtesy
of Metropolitain Research
Center, Houston Public
Library).*

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*Historic Photo of 1923
Main Street, 1930's.
Photo courtesy of MRC,
HPL.*

architectural styles tell the story of commercial development along North Main. These buildings are ideal for rehabilitation utilizing the federal Investment Tax Credit program. This program, administered jointly by the IRS and the National Park Service provides a 20% tax credit from federal income tax for a substantial rehabilitation of a historic building that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Case Study 2

An early 20th century gas station-
Historic buildings can be found in unlikely places. The *!Aye Chiwawa!* (picture right) taco stand on North Main was originally built as a gas station. This building is another candidate for the 20% tax credit program.



!Aye Chiwawa! Taco Stand; Before.



!Aye Chiwawa! Taco Stand; after.

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